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MEMORANDUM FOR: Karen

Mr. McMahon originated the attached letter to Clark. Mr. Casey plans to handcarry it himself and discuss with Clark. I have given Registry a copy.

S.

Date

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

The Honorable William P. Clark
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Bill,

I have your note regarding your proposal to place an NSC Staffer as an observer on the National Foreign Intelligence Board. I would like to counsel against doing so. The principal function of the National Foreign Intelligence Board is to enable me to present the President with coordinated intelligence and fulfill my responsibility as his principal foreign intelligence adviser. It would be counterproductive if you and the President were receiving commentary gleaned by a staffer as an observer to the intelligence process at the NFIB.

You also must be well aware of the fear that constantly exists in Washington over politicizing intelligence. That fear has been expressed innumerable times, particularly in light of the dual roles that I play as DCI and as a Cabinet member. Placing a member of your Staff into the NFIB arena would add further grist to that mill, and I think it would create a hassle that all of us need not experience. I am sure that whoever would sit in as an observer would be conscientious in attempting to avoid any such conflict, however, the perception would remain and I do not think the potential value would be worth the grief.

As an alternative, let me suggest that John and I meet with you and Bud regularly each week, possibly for breakfast, and discuss the pertinent issues of the time.

Sincerely,

William J. Casey